Crisis in higher education

192. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether several studies and Eleventh Five Year Approach Plan paper have revealed that India is facing a deep crisis in higher education, with declining standards and poor governance of higher institutions of learning, and that only about eight per cent of the relevant age group of students go for university education, higher education whereas in many developing countries the percentage is between 20 and 25;

(b) whether his Ministry and Planning Commission are considering to set up new institutions to provide easier access to students in educationally backward districts; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve higher education in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of higher education is at present 9.7% (2006-07), which is lower in comparison to many developing countries. Various schemes of development assistance to eligible colleges and universities for improving quality of higher education are being implemented. These schemes aim, *inter-alia*, at improving curriculum, strengthening infrastructure, orientation and in-service training of the teachers and encourage research. The University Grants Commission provides Special Development Grant for universities in backward areas. It is also proposed to assist State Government's, to incentivise them to establish at least one college in each district which has a low Gross Enrolment Ratio, during the XI Plan, subject to availability of resources.

Demands of Navodaya Vidyalayas

193. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Navodaya Vidyalayas in the country have submitted their demands to Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the teaching and non-teaching staff separately;

(c) the reaction of Government in relation to each demand and the action taken so far on them; and

(d) if no action has been finalized so far, by when it is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The main demands of the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Navodaya Vidyalayas are (i) introduction of pension scheme for the employees of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and (ii) re-introduction of payment of gratuity to the teachers of the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti. The introduction of pension scheme to the employees of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti was earlier taken up in consultation of the Ministry of Finance, but could not be agreed to.